

A PROBLEM OF VISIBILITY

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Mr. Fresco has just returned to this country after three years with the Foreign Service in Turkey.

In the Middle East recently, America has been beset by the troubles of Job. Egypt is now a Russian camp; Soviet naval strength in the eastern Mediterranean nearly equals that of our own Sixth Fleet; relations with the Arab states are almost nonexistent; we have gained the contempt of our closest European friends by backing the sleazy Greek junta willy-nilly. The next explosion may occur in Turkey.

This September the last of more than 500 Peace Corps volunteers will leave Ankara, virtually forced out of the country by the anti-American climate. Most of those volunteers had taught English at universities in Ankara and Istanbul. Last winter, students in one department after another boycotted the classes, saying they would not return until all the volunteers, whom they called CIA spies, and other foreign teachers were removed from the classrooms. Volunteers were threatened with violence. In Istanbul, a classroom was invaded by leftist students and a British teacher badly beaten. Although the conservative government of Prime Minister Demirel insisted the volunteers were still welcome, it was considered politically unwise to take their side publicly against student leaders. The volunteers themselves voted not to teach in faculties where they were not wanted. In May, Peace Corps Director Jack Corry announced the decision to close out operations completely.

After World War I, Mustafa Kemal fashioned the modern state of Turkey from the battered wreck of the Ottoman Empire. He emancipated women, adopted the Western alphabet and dress, tried to suppress the Islamic clergy and embarked on a program of literacy and industrialization to pull Turkey into 20th-century Europe. But when he died in 1938 at the age of 57, Kemal left his work half done. The greatest strains in Turkish society derive from incomplete Westernization. Whether on the Center or the Left, urban, educated Turks call themselves Kemalists. Outside of Russia and China, this is the world's most atheistic elite. Many no longer think of themselves as Moslems. Miniskirts and Marxism abound at Istanbul and Ankara universities. The granddaughters of veiled harem favorites practice law and medicine. Arabic words are purged from the vocabulary and replaced by those derived from French. Although Maoism gains favor among the young, the dominant spirit today is Gaullist—Turkey should be friendly to the West, but without formal military ties.

This group of university intellectuals and professionals, upper civil servants and army officers, comprises less than 5 per cent of the population. Another 15 per cent is in the middle class: government clerks and businessmen. But in the villages and small towns, where 80 per cent of the population still lives, life has altered little from centuries past. Women wear the traditional baggy trousers and cover their faces with headscarves. There is no school, and the majority of village women remain illiterate. The Imams, the priests, hated by the city elite, still

wield tremendous power over education and morals. Villagers are devout Moslems; more than 50,000 made the pilgrimage to Mecca last year. Under pressure from the rural clergy the Demirel government has bent the spirit, if not broken the letter, of the Kemalist-inspired constitution by constructing dozens of religious schools throughout the country in the last five years. The fact that the United States openly supports this government has done little to endear the resident Americans to the secular, urban elite.

But the primary cause for anti-American feeling is our continued military presence in Turkey. On the basis of Turkey's neutrality in World War II and the not so secret pro-German feeling of some of its leaders, Stalin in 1946 demanded that the Turks hand over several eastern provinces and control of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles to the Soviets. The threat was hardly new. In the past 300 years Russia and Turkey have fought thirteen wars over Russian claims to the Straits. Stalin's challenge came when Greece, next door, seemed destined to fall to Communist guerrillas in a murderous civil war. The American answer was to wrap these two ancient enemies, Greece and Turkey, into an untidy package called the Truman Doctrine. The battleship *Missouri* steamed triumphantly into the Bosphorus and sailors were invited into Turkish homes. His bluff called, Stalin soon dropped his threat. We were the beloved saviors. When war broke out in Korea, the Turks were among the first to send troops. As a reward Turkey, as well as Greece, was admitted to NATO in 1952, and for the first time U.S. troops were stationed on Turkish soil. Turkey was the eastern flank of the alliance, and the half-million-man Turkish army became the shield against Russian penetration of the Middle East.

Today, there are 18,000 U.S. servicemen and their families in Turkey, mostly with the Air Force. They perform two military functions. The air base at Incirlik in southern Turkey is used by the Strategic Air Command. A string of radar and other communications facilities near the Black Sea monitors Russian activity to the north. But many at the American Embassy admit that the airfield and radar stations have only marginal importance in the era of missiles and spy satellites. They also state privately that the 3,000 desk pilots in Ankara, who are the prime irritants, do little more than shuffle papers and manage the PX.

The U.S. Air Force in Turkey is not the Mongol horde. Molesting of Turkish women is unknown; drunken brawls are rare. But whenever pampered foreign soldiers are placed in an underdeveloped country, resentment and jealousy will soon fester.

In Ankara, the airmen do not live on bases but in the city itself. An American sergeant can afford an apartment next door to a senior Turkish university professor, and can buy cheap whiskey and cigarettes, which the professor cannot. There is a thickheaded opinion among our Turks that the U.S. Air Force nurse in Ankara recently remarked of a co-worker, "There's only one thing wrong with him: he's a Turk." Noncommis-